
John Allen Chalk: Personal Correspondence

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From: Walter E. Burch

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1746 Dutch Broadway
Elmont, N.Y. 11003
May 11, 1968

Dear John Allen-

Thanks for your nice letter of May 8.

Re: Don Haymes' remarks at Camp Shiloh recently—
I do not believe it is always necessary to be
"constructive" in order to open up,
surgically-like, truth. For example, racism
must be exposed as sin regardless of whether
a definitive program of reconciliation is
proposed in the same address. Your
sermon on the "Continuing Message of Martin
Luther King" is a kind of example.

Your lecture, as I indicated from the floor
at Camp Shiloh, was more formal and
characteristically biblical and effective.
But I think Don got at the matter
(lying dormant in everybody's mind) in a very
moving, spontaneous, unorganized,
and completely honest way.

I agree ^(his response) it was probably "too strong" for some (dismissing Don as a "insincere radical") and somewhat embarrassing to a great many others. It is the why of the embarrassment that concerns me.

You and I both know -- once Dale Castleman had asked the question about "specifics" (regarding "how far" a church like W. Islip can go in tolerating doctrinal differences -- that James Hance of the W. Islip eldership was faced with the one question or issue that no one wants to answer -- or, in a sense, one that really cannot be answered in a manner that would be in harmony with our tradition. John, I believe the brethren at W. Islip, as much as any congregation I know, have learned to grow and have learned the meaning of real fellowship in Christ (by learning -- and it ain't easy! -- to tolerate doctrinal differences that most church leaders

would rather did not exist). Only this week Duwain spoke publicly for the W. Islip Church of Christ, along with the ^{city} clergy, in favor of a controversial open housing ordinance pending before Islip Township officials.

The "differences" (at least, at one time) within the Islip membership ^{have} ranged from charismatic gifts (speaking in tongues); to man's origin^s (evolution as a possible way God chose to create him); to honest questions regarding the virgin birth of Jesus, ^{the canon,} the mythical and/or allegorical element in O.T.; whether the apostles were "always infallibly" right" in their pronouncements in the N.T. epistles; whether baptism is valid by sprinkling - pouring; the destiny of "other non-Christian religionists" - or whether God collaborates with "geography" to result in their eternal loss; doctrines of heaven and hell, etc. Please, John,

[ON A VERY CONFIDENTIAL BASIS]

you are aware ^{that} I am ~~not~~ citing just
 a few of the kinds of issues --
 intellectual & otherwise -- these
 men at W. Islip have faced. I
 rather doubt the eldership at
 College & Highland have faced these
 within a month's time ^(HA) -- questions
 posed ^{nevertheless} by honest and sincere ^{and} thinking
 Christians. God is with this
 church, I am convinced, more
 than anything I know. Consider
 its influence, its boldness (to take
 on Don Haymes!! for an inner city
 Ministry; Faith Corps, street
 preaching, etc.). Now -- James
 Hance could not --- without publicly
 "scandalizing" the whole congregation
 because of the concerns of a
 relatively small number ---
 speak out on the "specifics" that
 Dale requested. But why?
 Because of a tradition we have
 inherited that fears doctrinal
 differences --- on really basic

matters. I believe ^{the} early church had a capacity & resilience to a broader spectrum of differences than the most "liberal" of our brethren would tolerate. Of course, I may be dead wrong. I must realize this too.

Finally, on this matter, I would just say that I accepted the essential truth of what Don said, without agreeing with everything he said, or the raw spirit in which it was said.

But I appreciate Don as a Christian brother and whatever truth he ~~for~~ ^(or can) will speak ^{will} edify me. I don't feel his remarks ~~are~~ ^{had to do} "good" as you seem to want. Personally, the

Friday night meeting impressed me more than Saturday's. I was pleased with Ray's lecture, but very disappointed in J. A. Roberts' and Bill Martin's presentations. Bill's was just a rehash of Nashville ^[a Brookline lecture] ~~rehash~~ talk, and I told him I was disappointed and had hoped he would have ^{had} something fresh to say after giving that talk.

more than two years ago. Also I was very disappointed in "Dialogue" with Carl Henry. His remarks showed about the same level of awareness as his editorials.

Keep me posted on your plan to submit sermons on race for "H.g.T." broadcast. I would like to read the ones you submit -- if this would be possible. Negro brethren find it incredible that Highland doesn't move out, although Bill Martin said he remembered you did preach a sermon on racial discrimination on H.g.T. about two years ago. Perhaps you can update that one.

Keep in mind it was "unanimous" opinion & recommendation of one of our H.T. Workshop groups last August that a "series" of sermons on racial injustice be preached on radio & TV. What do others

SEE
H.T.
WORKSHOP
REPORT

say to this? They ought to be
on you to do this unpleasant
~~God~~ task that God has laid
before us all.

Norvel Young recently assured Eugene
Lawton (in telephone call) that
20thCC would publish "Christ and
Race Relations" issue in July. Two
articles were ~~rejected~~ ^(for theological reasons) - mine and
Gumbaug's. We plan to submit
different ones. Bill Banowsky
has invited others to add articles
to this series -- Matt Young, Ira North,
Jennings Davis, Jr., Prentice Meador,
possibly others. Your concern
and fellowship in this is
sincerely appreciated. You have
a special calling -- of influence
and ability. I am convinced
if ~~one's~~ ^{one's} ability is used for
truth, then influence will take
care of itself ultimately. When
influence becomes dominant ^{concern}

- 8 -

I become fearful of whether the
ability -- the capacity to act -- will
be ~~castrated~~ castrated.

Glad you liked the CHRISTIAN
CHRONICLE supplement. Help us
promote copies of it.

Love to Sue & family --
As ever --
Walter

P.S. What is Reuel's reaction to your Martin Luther
King article? Will he publish it? Get a
written reply. If not, send it to
BC Goodpasture & request a written
reply. Then if both reject the article,
mail it to Jimmie Lovell ^{for ACTION} with explanation
that GA & FF rejected article and why
(if reasons are given by editors).

Incidentally, I have retyped my article (rejected
by 20th CC) and sent it to Reuel -- the first religious
article (other than ^{"diary"} transpublicity) I have sent him since 1957.